

Ethics

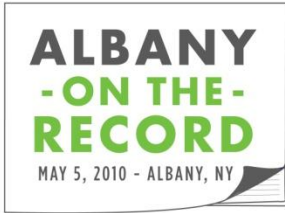
New York State's public officers, executive, legislative, and election laws, are intended to provide a framework for the appropriate behavior of public officials and candidates for office. They also creates the enforcement agencies charged with monitoring of such laws.



Ethics Law

New York State's ethics law requires, among other things:

- disclosure of outside income;
- limitations on employment after a public official leaves government service;
- limitations on gifts and a near ban on gifts from lobbyists; and
- general restrictions on behavior during public service.



Ethics watchdogs

- Commission on Public Integrity: monitors ethics of the executive branch and of lobbyists and their clients.
- Legislative Ethics Commission: monitors ethics of the legislative branch.
- Inspector General: investigate allegations of misconduct of the executive branch.
- Attorney General: has powers to investigate allegations of official misconduct.
- State Board of Elections: enforces campaign finance law.



Limitations

- Commission on Public Integrity: Has 13 Commissioners the majority of whom are appointed by the governor.
- Legislative Ethics Commission: Has 9 members, 4 of whom are legislators.
- Ethics disclosures offer very little public information.
- State Board of Elections: Controlled by the political parties, weak penalties, few resources.



Failures

- Commission on Public Integrity investigation of the “Troopergate” scandal criticized by Inspector General.
- Legislative Ethics Commission has never punished anyone (as far as we know).
- State Board of Elections not aggressive.



Results?

- Unprecedented controversies and scandals have engulfed the Capitol.
- Eroding public support for their own state government.